

Jan's Rehearsal Notes – October 19, 2026

A special “thank you” to everyone who made Monday’s rehearsal so successful in rather adverse conditions. I just learned that the heat is on in the Twitchell Chapel and all is well.

Adeste Fideles – We worked on P. 6, M. 43. The dynamic is **mp** through M. 48. I am adding the dynamic marking of **mf** at M. 49 until the crescendo at M. 52 to the **forte** at M. 54. Remember this piece has a 2/2 time signature which means that the half note gets the beat. We added a dynamic marking of **mf** on M. 80 through the **forte** marking on M. 84. The upper voices singing the descant on P. 8, M. 60 went over their part. I am sure the volume will increase as the part becomes more familiar. We will be adding the Bell Chimes and Flute at a later date. This piece is coming along nicely.

Winter Wonderland - It was apparent that many of you have been listening to the rehearsal tracks for your individual voice part. There is a slow track and an up to temp track for all voices. We reviewed parts where it was necessary and concentrated on P. 9, M. 53 to the end. M. 77 on P. 12 is still catching people by surprise. Please listen to the rehearsal tracks for the correct rhythm and pitches. (Altos sing a Bb)

WHAT TO WORK ON FOR NEXT WEEK – This piece is starting to come together. I would suggest working on the entire piece but if time is limited, start on M. 36 on P. 7 and go to the end. This is one of the few choral pieces that we have sung that does not modulate. (change key) The entire piece is written in Db Major (5 flats) but there are lots of accidentals which make this piece challenging and fun. Enjoy it.

Sleigh Ride – Good work on this lively and familiar piece. This is one of the three pieces I conduct in 2 beats to a measure. My other pieces are in 4/4. To avoid the confusion of flipping pages back and forth may I make a suggestion that might help? Put a paper clip on P. 4 and make a note that you will return to M.13 when you get to the bottom of P.13, M. 102. Put another paper clip on P. 14 where you will find the CODA on M. 103. The Sopranos and Altos will add the “Yoo-hoos” on the second time only on P. 5, M. 23.

WHAT TO WORK ON FOR NEXT WEEK – P. 5, pickup to M. 29 through M. 7. Lower voice on P. 7, M. 45 through M. 50. Lighten up your voices and give a slight emphasis to each half note. This is a legato section. (notes are connected) Please work on the crescendo at the bottom of P. 11, pickup to M. 79. Don’t forget the “subito mezzo piano” on the pickup to M. 79. We sing the same notes 8 times so there has to be a dynamic contrast. The same dynamics are used from the pickup to M. 83 on P. 11. Practice singing from the bottom of P. 8 to the CODA at the top of P. 14.

Brightest and Best – Please be aware of the “Chorus” sections of this piece on P. 5, M. 25, P. 8, M. 60 and P. 12, M. 99. The last chorus is more embellished. The Altos have the melody and the Sopranos sing above them. The Tenor part is high. You are doing a nice job with good tone quality going up to the higher notes.

WHAT TO WORK ON FOR NEXT WEEK – When you feel secure with your part (notes and rhythms) try singing the song a little faster. The suggested tempo is half-note = 120 – 132 so we have a range of tempos to try. Watch the dynamic markings. There are a lot of repeated sections in this piece so the dynamics will help to add contrast and excitement. Practice from going from P. 13, M. 115 to P. 14, M. 124. Don't be caught off guard. Anticipate the page turn. Try to memorize the words of the "Chorus."

WHAT DO THE WORDS OF THE CHORUS MEAN TO YOU?

"Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid.
Star in the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Here is what these words mean to me.

The Star in the East is the brightest and best of the morning stars.
We are asking this bright star to give us light and to help us by leading
Us to our infant Redeemer.

I AM VERY EAGER TO HEAR YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THESE WORDS.

Charlie's Notes:

Thank you for a good rehearsal last night, despite the frigid temps.

AFRICAN NOEL:

It was a pleasure to hear you sing this piece after the many weeks of not practicing it. It needs a bit of fine tuning to help make it sound fantastic. The overall results so far are good. Here are specific places that could use your attention

Starting on measure 15 on page 5, the staggered entrances sometimes start a bit late or are just a bit slower than the rhythm shows. Try to enter right on time. This is a section where you have to enter right on the first beat of your measure and with the same speed as the altos (thank you!) sing. I think it is a challenge that is made a bit more difficult if you rely only on your hearing to know when to start. This situation happens in many ensembles that I have sung in. Please watch me carefully - if you can memorize this section, as well as measures 27 through 30, it will help tighten up any ragged entrances. The final section from measure 31 to the end was very good. The goal is to gradually sing more quietly for each repetition of the text "Sing Noel, Sing Noel, Noel Noel" until it is almost a whisper. I was so delighted you all watched me for the cut off and last two notes on measure 50. This is shaping up to be a real crowd pleaser.

Enniscorthy Carol:

Also, a pleasure to hear and conduct. At measure 21, the entrance of the full choir makes a great musical statement, which is repeated each time we all sing. The bass and tenor duet measures 32 - 39 and the alto and soprano duet measure 49 - 56 are placed between the full choir entrances. and act as a comment on the text of the full choir. Altos have a lovely

harmony that needs lots of energy - please take a moment to review this with the practice track. Measures 68 -73 are powerful as you sing in octaves that introduce the final section. We are getting there! Thank you.

Jingle ALLL the Ways:

Such a fun piece, but challenging!! It is starting to gel nicely, particularly from the beginning to measure 70. I promise to spiff up my conducting on measures 72 and 73 so we can sail triumphantly to the end. Keep up the good work - I really appreciate your efforts on this musical challenge for both you and me. Your efforts make this task easier.

I look forward to the next rehearsal, in which I will focus on Long Ago, The Christmas Tree Feud, and I Saw Three Ships. Thank you.